

Nine people were subsequently indicted by a federal grand jury, tried, and on May 1, 1997, convicted of conspiracy and obstruction of the Internal Revenue Service, assault on an elected official and federal racketeering. This trial signified the first prosecution of a sexual assault on an elected official by an anti-government splinter group. Sentencing ranged from six months in-home detainment, to approximately seven years in federal prison. On November 10, 1997, Roger Steiner, the assailant, was convicted and sentenced to 21 years, 10 months in federal prison.

Karen is the chairwoman of a special committee formed by the California State Recorder's Association to develop legislation to protect recorders dealing with threatening anti-government criminal extremists. Karen was instrumental in the passage of legislation, resulting in two California laws; one to protect public officials from general threats and harassment; and the other to expedite court resolution of frivolous documents.

She has testified twice before congressional committees regarding domestic terrorism. She is now working to pass federal legislation protecting victims from frivolous lawsuits brought by inmates. Over the past three years she has been featured on NBC Dateline, periodicals such as People, The New York Times, Klanwatch, and a soon to be published article in The Ladies Home Journal. With this exposure, she hopes to help educate America on the danger and cowardice of anti-government extremists.

I want to commend and recognize Karen Mathews for her courage and outstanding service and dedication to the citizens of Stanislaus County. It is a privilege to call her my friend and I ask my colleagues to rise and join me in honoring her as she retires from public life.

HISPANIC HERITAGE MONTH

HON. CHARLES B. RANGEL

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, October 16, 2001

Mr. RANGEL. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to emphasize the importance of Hispanic Heritage Month, September 15th–October 15th. A culture that began over 500 years ago as a fusion between Spanish and indigenous societies across the Americas, the Hispanic community has helped forge our Nation's identity and today the Latino population is the largest minority group in the United States. The Hispanic community enriches the ethnic diversity that makes our Nation unique, contributing greatly to the cultural, artistic, economic and political life of this country.

Like many other immigrants who came to this country in pursuit of the American dream, Hispanics have struggled to overcome adversity, fighting stereotypes and discrimination. This battle has not been easy and I salute all those that have worked to advance the prosperity of our Latino population. While this fight is far from over, we can see the results of our efforts throughout the Country, beginning with our Congress. Today, I am joined by a constantly growing number of Hispanic col-

leagues, each with a strong work ethic and committed to public service and the preservation of our democracy.

At home in New York City, I am proud to represent a district that reflects a cultural mosaic of Hispanic groups such as people of Puerto Rican, Dominican, Mexican and Cuban heritage. The influence of Latin culture is seen throughout the streets of Upper Manhattan from Washington Heights to El Barrio. It is an essential part of the cultural Mecca that defines the 15th congressional district and I am honored to speak for one of the Nation's most distinct groups.

More than our fellow citizens, Latinos are our brothers and sisters. I would like to honor and thank the entire Hispanic community its contributions to the past, present, and future of the United States.

IN HONOR OF THE 150TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE PARISH CHURCH OF OUR LADY OF GRACE

HON. ROBERT MENENDEZ

OF NEW JERSEY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, October 16, 2001

Mr. MENENDEZ. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor and celebrate the 150th Anniversary of Our Lady of Grace Church. This church has served the community of Hoboken, New Jersey for many generations. The church will celebrate its anniversary on Saturday, October 20, 2001, at the Casino-In-The-Park Restaurant in Jersey City, New Jersey.

Our Lady of Grace Church is one of the largest Roman Catholic Churches in New Jersey. It was founded in 1851. Today, Our Lady of Grace Church stands as the focal point of Hoboken's Church Square Park. Its cornerstone was laid in 1875, construction of this grand edifice was completed in 1878 and dedicated by Bishop Corrigan.

Francis G. Himpler, a well-known 19th Century architect, designed this grand gothic structure. After the church dedication in 1878, members of the Italian and French royal families donated ceremonial works of art to decorate this magnificent dwelling.

This Church is well known for its kindness, charity, and for its involvement in the parish. Our Lady of Grace Church stands poised to continue to make invaluable contributions to the ongoing success of the Hoboken community.

Today, I ask my colleagues to join me in honoring Our Lady of Grace Church on its 150th Anniversary.

REMARKS OF SECRETARY OF DEFENSE DONALD RUMSFELD

HON. IKE SKELTON

OF MISSOURI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, October 16, 2001

Mr. SKELTON. Mr. Speaker, I am proud to share with the Members of the House the excellent remarks of Secretary of Defense Donald H. Rumsfeld yesterday at the Memorial

Service in Remembrance of Those Lost on September 11th. The fine statement is set forth as follows:

We are gathered here because of what happened here on September 11th. Events that bring to mind tragedy—but also our gratitude to those who came to assist that day and afterwards, those we saw at the Pentagon site everyday—the guards, police, fire and rescue workers, the Defense Protective service, hospitals, Red Cross, family center professionals and volunteers and many others.

And yet our reason for being here today is something else.

We are gathered here to remember, to console and to pray.

To remember comrades and colleagues, friends and family members—those lost to us on Sept. 11th.

We remember them as heroes. And we are right to do so. They died because—in words of justification offered by their attackers—they were Americans. They died, then, because of how they lived—as free men and women, proud of their freedom, proud of their country and proud of their country's cause—the cause of human freedom.

And they died for another reason—the simple fact they worked here in this building—the Pentagon.

It is seen as a place of power, the locus of command for what has been called the greatest accumulation of military might in history. And yet a might used far differently than the long course of history has usually known.

In the last century, this building existed to oppose two totalitarian regimes that sought to oppress and to rule other nations. And it is no exaggeration of historical judgment to say that without this building, and those who worked here, those two regimes would not have been stopped or thwarted in their oppression of countless millions.

But just as those regimes sought to rule and oppress, others in this century seek to do the same by corrupting a noble religion. Our President has been right to see the similarity—and to say that the fault, the evil is the same. It is the will to power, the urge to dominion over others, to the point of oppressing them, even to taking thousands of innocent lives—or more. And that this oppression makes the terrorist a believer—not in the theology of God, but the theology of self—and in the whispered words of temptation: "Ye shall be as Gods."

In targeting this place, then, and those who worked here, the attackers, the evildoers correctly sensed that the opposite of all they were, and stood for, resided here.

Those who worked here—those who on Sept. 11 died here—whether civilians or in uniform,—side by side they sought not to rule, but to serve. They sought not to oppress, but to liberate. They worked not to take lives, but to protect them. And they tried not to preempt God, but see to it His creatures lived as He intended—in the light and dignity of human freedom.

Our first task then is to remember the fallen as they were—as they would have wanted to be remembered—living in freedom, blessed by it, proud of it and willing—like so many others before them, and like so many today, to die for it.

And to remember them as believers in the heroic ideal for which this nation stands and for which this building exists—the ideal of service to country and to others.

Beyond all this, their deaths remind us of a new kind of evil, the evil of a threat and menace to which this nation and the world has now fully awakened, because of them.

In causing this awakening, then, the terrorists have assured their own destruction. And those we mourn today, have, in the moment of their death, assured their own triumph over hate and fear. For out of this act of terror—and the awakening it brings—here and across the globe—will surely come a victory over terrorism. A victory that one day may save millions from the harm of weapons of mass destruction. And this victory—their victory—we pledge today.

But if we gather here to remember them—we are also here to console those who shared their lives, those who loved them. And yet, the irony is that those whom we have come to console have given us the best of all consolations, by reminding us not only of the meaning of the deaths, but of the lives of their loved ones.

"He was a hero long before the eleventh of September," said a friend of one of those we have lost—"a hero every single day, a hero to his family, to his friends and to his professional peers."

A veteran of the Gulf War—hardworking, who showed up at the Pentagon at 3:30 in the morning, and then headed home in the afternoon to be with his children—all of whom he loved dearly, but one of whom he gave very special care, because she needs very special care and love.

About him and those who served with him, his wife said: "It's not just when a plane hits their building. They are heroes every day."

"Heroes every day." We are here to affirm that. And to do this on behalf of America.

And also to say to those who mourn, who have lost loved ones: Know that the heart of America is here today, and that it speaks to each one of you words of sympathy, consolation, compassion and love. All the love that the heart of America—and a great heart it is—can muster.

Watching and listening today, Americans everywhere are saying: I wish I could be there to tell them how sorry we are, how much we grieve for them. And to tell them too, how thankful we are for those they loved, and that we will remember them, and recall always the meaning of their deaths and their lives.

A Marine chaplain, in trying to explain why there could be no human explanation for a tragedy such as this, said once: "You would think it would break the heart of God."

We stand today in the midst of tragedy—the mystery of tragedy. Yet a mystery that is part of that larger awe and wonder that causes us to bow our heads in faith and say of those we mourn, those we have lost, the words of scripture: "Lord now let Thy servants go in peace, Thy word has been fulfilled."

To the families and friends of our fallen colleagues and comrades we extend today our deepest sympathy and condolences—and those of the American people.

We pray that God will give some share of the peace that now belongs to those we lost, to those who knew and loved them in this life.

But as we grieve together we are also thankful—thankful for their lives, thankful for the time we had with them. And proud too—as proud as they were—that they lived their lives as Americans.

We are mindful too—and resolute that their deaths, like their lives, shall have meaning. And that the birthright of human freedom—a birthright that was theirs as Americans and for which they died—will always be ours and our children's. And through our efforts and example, one day, the birthright of every man, woman, and child on earth.

CONGRATULATIONS TO AZERBAIJAN

HON. DAN BURTON

OF INDIANA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, October 16, 2001

Mr. BURTON of Indiana. Mr. Speaker, I would like to present my most sincere congratulations to President Aliyev on the occasion of the 10th anniversary of the restoration of Azerbaijan's independence. The past several years have proven your nation's commitment to democracy, and I encourage you to continue your efforts aimed at strengthening Azerbaijan's independence, territorial integrity, and sovereignty. We, in the U.S. Congress, appreciate Azerbaijan's friendship and support, especially in these times of the international campaign against terrorism. Please, accept, Mr. President, my best wishes to yourself and the Azerbaijani people on this anniversary.

RURAL EXEMPTION ENHANCEMENT ACT OF 2001

HON. GEORGE RADANOVICH

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, October 16, 2001

Mr. RADANOVICH. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to introduce the "Rural Exemption Enhancement Act of 2001" (REEA). This modest proposal would ensure greater regulatory certainty for many of our nation's rural telephone companies as they continue their efforts to bring quality and affordable advanced telecommunications services to our communities. I am pleased that this legislation has been endorsed by the Organization for the Promotion and Advancement of Small Telecommunications Companies as well as Sierra Telephone Company in my home district.

More than five years ago, Congress passed comprehensive legislation to reform our nation's telecommunications laws—the Telecommunications Act of 1996. In crafting this legislation, Congress wisely included provisions which exempt rural telephone companies from the collocation, unbundling and resale obligations imposed upon incumbent local exchange carriers. Congress understood that these obligations would not serve the best interests of rural consumers and would deter investment in high-cost areas that are already challenging to serve due to a lack of economies of scale.

Mr. Speaker, it is important to note that the rural exemption accorded to rural telephone companies is not permanent and can be lifted by a State commission. Under section 251(f) of the Telecommunications Act, a new entrant may make a bona fide request to a State commission to lift a rural ILEC's exemption. Following a 120 day evaluation of the request, a State commission may lift the exemption if the request from the competing carrier is not found to be unduly economically burdensome, is technically feasible, and is consistent with the universal service provisions of the Act.

I am very concerned, however, that the lifting of a rural telephone company exemption

by a State commission currently applies to both voice grade and advanced services. The current process for evaluating a petition to lift a rural exemption provides disincentive for small, rural carriers to make costly investment in advanced telecommunications service infrastructure. For these reasons, I am introducing the "Rural Exemption Enhancement Act."

My legislation should not in any way be interpreted to be a competing proposal to H.R. 1542, the "Internet Freedom and Broadband Deployment Act of 2001" passed by the House Energy and Commerce Committee. I am proud to be a cosponsor and active supporter of that proposal. The bill that I am introducing today would simply make it clear that a request to lift the voice grade exemption should be made and evaluated separately from the advanced services exemption.

Mr. Speaker, this Congress and the President will spend the remainder of this session developing legislation that is vital to our nation's economy and national security. I look forward to working with my colleagues to move this legislation forward next year before the 107th Congress adjourns sine die.

IN HONOR OF CELIA CRUZ, RECIPIENT OF THE JAMES SMITHSON BICENTENNIAL MEDAL

HON. ROBERT MENENDEZ

OF NEW JERSEY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, October 16, 2001

Mr. MENENDEZ. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor and pay tribute to musical legend Celia Cruz. On Tuesday, October 16, 2001, Ms. Cruz will be awarded the James Smithsonian Bicentennial Medal for her distinguished musical career and invaluable contributions to our nation's cultural heritage. The award ceremony will take place at the Smithsonian Institution in Washington, DC.

Celia Cruz was born and raised in the Santa Suárez neighborhood of Havana, Cuba. As a young girl, she spent much of her spare time entertaining her peers, friends, and neighbors by singing lullabies and melodies. In the 1940's, she officially began her musical career by singing on numerous Cuban radio programs. She expanded her musical aptitude by studying at Havana's Conservatory of Music from 1947 to 1950.

In 1950, Celia Cruz gained international acclaim by becoming the lead singer for Cuba's top dance band, La Sonora Matancera. For over fifteen years, La Sonora Matancera electrified sold-out audiences with their vibrant and catchy Afro-Cuban melodies and rhythms.

Throughout much of her career, Celia Cruz has been hailed as the "Queen of Salsa" due to her energetic and animated musical performances. Cruz, a Grammy Award winner and Latina musical icon, has enjoyed a dynamic career that has spanned over five decades, recorded countless albums, and has often performed with musical great Tito Puente.

Today, I ask my colleagues to join me in honoring Celia Cruz, for her immeasurable contributions throughout her illustrious career. The James Smithsonian, Bicentennial Medal